



Brain Bliss training in PSI

School Improvement Ignites a Journey Toward Discipleship

“Ultimately, my dream,” exclaims Dr. Debbie MacCullough, Higher Education Consultant for ACSI Global, “is to see Christian schooling impacting the world for Christ by developing disciples and, eventually, disciple-makers.” This dream fuels Debbie’s work on an innovative school improvement tool called Paths to School Improvement (PSI)—a tool designed to encourage any school to become better. For most national* Christian schools in the majority world, ACSI’s standard accreditation is unattainable—the process leading up to it is much too rigorous and expensive. Yet there are a few shining examples: select national schools in Zimbabwe and Nigeria have verifiably met ACSI’s accreditation standards. PSI was birthed from ACSI Global’s missional passion to “strengthen Christian schools and equip Christian educators” in their over 20,000 affiliated national schools and help them improve—whatever their level of maturity. The hope is that, for many, this journey will lead to full accreditation. However, PSI is designed to meet schools where they are and assist them in becoming authentic Christian schools, helping students better understand God’s Word and His world.

Brian Bliss, PSI project coordinator for ACSI, has a lifetime of experience with African Christian schools as a student, faculty member, and leader. Together, Brian and Debbie are working diligently to develop a tool that is appropriate and attainable for training a broad range of schools and school leaders, as well as easily adaptable and reproducible in a variety of settings and contexts. Debbie and Brian’s PSI team spans two continents, and so they conduct most of their meetings by video conference, with occasional highly productive in-person sessions.

PSI is now being piloted with two cohorts in Rwanda and Uganda, and while they share common experiences, each cohort faces challenges unique to its national context. Even so, the training has propelled them to grow in new ways. Like accreditation, PSI has standards, training, and a rubric that guides schools toward compliance. Training is the touchstone of PSI, setting it apart from other international organizations that set standards but provide negligible assistance in helping schools improve. Our goal is that every ACSI country leader be equipped to train their local school leaders with the PSI tool, moving them strategically toward maturity. The team is catching a glimpse of the promise of this vision. Ruth, a member of the Ugandan PSI cohort, recently shared that for the first time she learned that her passion for Jesus Christ and His Word should inform and shape all aspects of her school. She now sees her work differently. PSI is training Christian school leaders to use their educational calling and gifts to fulfill the Great Commission.

“PSI is training Christian school leaders to use their educational calling and gifts to fulfill the Great Commission.”

**National refers to country-specific Christian schools that conduct instruction in the national language; they are usually regulated by the national ministry of education. “International schools,” by contrast, are English-speaking.*



Throughout my 35 years in Christian schooling, I have witnessed the power of the accreditation process to significantly increase school effectiveness. Not only did I experience it firsthand in the school I had the privilege of leading in Sao Paulo, Brazil, but I have observed the school improvement process in

hundreds of schools in the U.S. and around the world. Schools that commit to continual improvement truly make a Kingdom impact. They value their distinctive mission enough to submit themselves to outside scrutiny, adopting a humble posture that seeks to learn from others.

My commitment to our newly developed Paths to School Improvement (PSI) is born from my personal experience as an international head of school, laboring to help our school flourish within its own unique cultural context. As I've traveled the globe, visiting hundreds of national schools, I've seen that most schools have the potential to grow in their effectiveness and capacity if they are given the right training. While they may not be ready for full accreditation, steps must be taken to promote growth and maturity, positioning them for the rigorous evaluation process. We simply have to meet them where they are. This is where Jesus meets me—meets all of us. He meets us where we are, and expands our vision and practice through relationship.

While PSI is being developed and piloted in Africa, our prayer is that it will be fully transferable to India, East Asia, and South America, as well. Twenty global ACSI offices will use PSI to train school leaders to strengthen and validate the growing Christian school movement within their reach. This is not the work of one week or season, but of many years.

It is the laborious work of tilling ground, planting and cultivating seeds, prayerfully expecting the harvest: a generation of leaders willing to follow Christ with abandon.

In His Service,

Michael Epp, Senior Vice President, ACSI Global



LEADERSHIP LEGACY ANNUAL FUND FUELS THE FUTURE

Today all of ACSI's global offices are led by prepared and passionate national leaders, who are equipped and empowered to lead the local Christian schooling movement within their own cultural context. As the influence and resources of the West decline, these national leaders will be the ones who extend and fuel the reach of Christ-centered education in their countries and regions.

Not only are intellects being developed, lives are being shaped—through the power of the Spirit—into the likeness of Christ. Our passion and prayer is that Christ be fully formed in the students who will one day lead the church and, possibly, nations.

Unprecedented opportunity. Unprecedented impact. Your partnership propels our reach, advancing Kingdom education. Invest today at www.acsi.org/give.



Like us on Facebook @ACSIUSA



Follow us on Twitter @ACSIUS

GLOBAL HIGHLIGHTS

Cuba

Will Cuba Open Its Doors to Christian Schools?

It's now been over two decades since communism fell in Eastern Europe and ACSI launched its fruitful service to a growing Christian school movement. Yet the island country of Cuba remains in the hold of communism, and throughout its 60-year tenure the government has forbidden private schools from existing. Cuba is the only country in the Western hemisphere without any Christian schools.

Significant inroads have been made, however, preparing for the day when the first Christian school can open its doors in Cuba. One of ACSI's leading member schools has been sending student mission teams to Cuba for over a decade. A Kingdom education initiative is taking shape under the guise of a "special education program" that serves nearly 200 students through an evening biblical worldview class. Stuart Salazar, director for ACSI Latin America, visited Cuba in March and observed the program. Stuart and his team will return in October 2017 to provide specialized training on biblical integration and worldview training for the teachers of this program. Join us in prayer for the imminent launch of Christian schooling in Cuba.

Hungary

International Educational Leadership Conference

ACSI Europe's International Educational Leadership Conference was held March 1–4, 2017, in Budapest, Hungary. Following the theme of *Leading from the Heart*, keynote speakers addressed various aspects of Christian school leadership. In addition, there were ten workshops that focused on the practical challenges faced by school leaders.

Approximately 185 Christian school leaders from 24 countries throughout Europe were in attendance. Two sessions were dedicated to helping Christian schools establish partnerships. School leaders were able to set up exhibits, sharing their individual programs and discussing ideas for working together. During the conference, Mike Epp (senior vice president, ACSI Global) and Laci Demeter (director, ACSI Europe) signed a partnership agreement with the Committee of Dutch Reformed school leaders. This agreement adds nine schools, 27 campuses, 2,550 teachers, and 26,000 students to ACSI Europe.

WHY WE GIVE: Donna Anderson

Donna Anderson, a lifelong resident of Los Angeles, attended only one ACSI convention in her 42-year career of teaching fourth grade at a small denominational school. Yet that one event introduced Donna to what God was doing through Christian schooling around the world, igniting a deep commitment to ACSI's global work. Since 2007, Donna has been a faithful supporter of Leadership Legacy and its mission to empower national leaders around the world.

In today's transient society, Donna's story is indeed remarkable. A product of Christian schooling (K–12), she attended the very school where she has spent her entire career. "As I look back over my many years of teaching," reflects Donna, "I see that God put me at my school because of my strong love for him and His Word. I spent five years in state college and I did not realize how much I missed the daily Bible study which I had experienced in school growing up. Most of my students do not attend church, and all the spiritual teaching they get is what they get from me. I love the look on their faces when the Bible comes alive to them. My greatest hope for my students is that I will meet them all in heaven."

For Donna, each day is an opportunity to invest in the students in her classroom, as well as in schools around the world. "I don't spend a lot of money on temporary things like clothes, restaurants, and vacations," Donna says. "I want to help people learn the truth, and hopefully they will be as happy and grateful to God as I am."



Donna Anderson with two of her 1988 4th graders: Geoffrey Walsh (left) and Nick Raschilla (right).

Leave a Legacy in Support of Christian Schooling

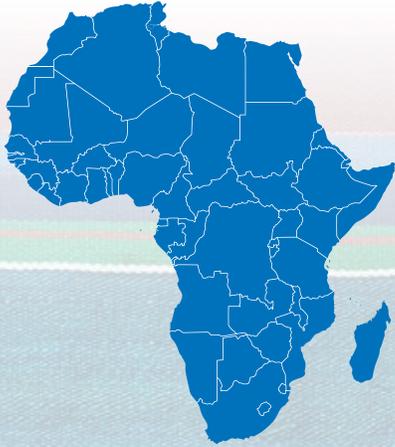
A gift in your will or living trust is the easiest way to support Christ-centered education.

Interested in helping ACSI advance the strategic growth, influence, and the effectiveness of Christian schooling worldwide—but feel overwhelmed at the thought of writing another check? A charitable bequest is a simple, flexible way to ensure we continue to make an impact in the future of Christian schooling for years to come.

By including a bequest to ACSI in your will or living trust, you are making a difference in the lives of Christian school students around the world. Your gift also entitles your estate to an unlimited federal estate tax charitable deduction. Contact Steve Dill (steve_dill@acsi.org) for more information.



731 Chapel Hills Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80920



Ignite
Global Christian Schooling

www.acsi.org/give



Global Leader Highlight Gavin Brettenny

Currently residing in Kandern, Germany, South African Gavin Brettenny's daily responsibilities are focused on the continent of Africa, and his strategic thinking extends to the scope of ACSI Global's work. Gavin's primary task is supporting the development of African national association offices as they develop creative and strategic initiatives that can impact every continent where ACSI serves. Africa provides fertile soil to produce fruitful programs like the Elephant Project, Paths to School Improvement, and the National Key Stage Strategy.

According to Gavin, "There are no other national Christian school associations serving schools in Africa, so we have plenty of opportunity to innovate and test educational strategies. Of course, our challenge is to develop trainers and procure the resources needed to make the most of these opportunities." Thus, programs like Paths to School Improvement possess extraordinary potential to impact Kingdom education throughout the majority world.

Gavin and his wife choose to live in Germany so their two sons can attend Black Forest Academy, an ACSI-accredited member school. Surprisingly, Germany is closer to some of the ACSI Africa offices Gavin serves than his native South Africa!

